

NFP remarks on Xenophobic Attacks

Honorable Speaker

Honorable Members

The National Freedom Party is outraged and dismayed about the acts of violence and intimidation of fellow Africans by some members of our community in recent days. It is totally unacceptable and must be acted against in the strongest terms.

As South Africans, we understand discrimination only too well. We have a painful past where we suffered human rights violations and so it is shocking that our own people are inflicting the same pain on others.

Our country has deep structural inequalities, poverty and unemployment which may all be contributing factors to the attacks we are witnessing. It is therefore necessary to call on government to speed up the pace of transformation and economic development. However, we are not saying that these should be used as excuses to hurt other people. Our anger must not be misdirected.

As the NFP we welcome the recent Imbizo called by His Majesty the King to call for an end to these attacks once and for all. As leaders, we now need to hold hands and speak with one voice by condemning xenophobia at every opportunity. It begins with simple things like condemning the use of words like

amakwerekwere when referring to foreigners. We need to start encouraging our people to see each other as humans. The time for playing the blame game is over and every South African should take responsibility by speaking out and reporting acts of violence against foreign nationals. We also welcome the announcement by the Department of Defence that it will deploy soldiers in certain areas to stop these attacks and we hope this will result in stability once more.

Many foreign nationals in our country today have come here because they seek better opportunities which they may not have in their native countries. It is therefore inhumane of us to attack them and to demand that they return to a life of hopelessness and poverty. However, while we should welcome those who seek relief in our country, we must also make sure that our laws are respected. Government must make sure that everyone who crosses our borders has permission to be here so that we do not become a lawless country where people can do as they wish.

It is quite ironic to note that these attacks are taking place in April, a month in which South Africa celebrates its freedom. Honorable Members, we need to remember that our freedom came at a price and that South Africa did not fight this struggle alone. Many countries on this continent and abroad, stood side by side with us so that we could take down the evil apartheid

regime. Let us remember how exiled South Africans we welcomed in these countries and given the support they need. My fellow South Africans, let us not become the monster we defeated.

The NFP wishes to convey its deep condolences to the families who have lost loved ones because of these attacks, our thoughts and prayers are with you. In the Sunday Times this week, we saw an article of the horrific murder of Emmanuel Sithole from Mozambique. As a party, we want his murderers to face the full might of the law in order to send a strong message to others that xenophobia will not be tolerated.

As South Africans, let us all stand together and say “Not in our name!”

Presented by: Honorable VR Mlotshwa